

News Release

Communication Students Interview Rex Veeder, Ph.D., "Iron Cat" Guest Speaker for IAS Conference at the U of M Crookston on Thursday, October 14, 2010

By Itollefs on Friday, October 8, 2010

Excitement is building around a conference taking place next week at the University of Minnesota Crookston. The Institute for Advanced Study Conference (IAS), the first ever on the Crookston campus, is slated for Thursday, October 14, 2010, in Bede Ballroom, Sargeant Student Center. The conference, which focuses on the theme of visual communication and interdisciplinarity, is free and the public is welcome to attend.

Two communication majors at the U of M Crookston recently interviewed Rex Veeder, Ph.D., (in photo) a keynote panelist about the IAS conference. The students, both juniors, Katelyn Zins, Starbuck, Minn., and Austin Czichotzki, Barnesville, Minn., authored the following interview with Veeder under the guidance of Associate Professor Mark Huglen, Ph.D., who was integral in bringing the conference to the Crookston campus.

Interview with Institute for Advanced Study Conference presenter, Rex Veeder, Ph.D., "Iron Cat":

"I believe poetry and music can find me when I sense the strong agitation of people wanting to live.... I choose not to be an official anything but cling to the syllables and songs -- of longings and desires of people for their lovers and for their children, and please, I say, please, remain angry and yet find the peace at the center of it."



This is a line from The Head Water Blues Opry, a musical written by Rex Veeder, Ph.D., and Leon Laudenbach. Veeder will be at the University of Minnesota Crookston as part of the keynote panel at the Institute for Advanced Study Conference taking place on October 14 from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Faculty, staff, and students from all areas of study will come together and have the opportunity to examine, speak about and explore the topic of visual persuasion and interdisciplinarity.

Veeder is honored to be a part of this conference. He believes that "conferences such as this are models for what should be happening all across the academic world." His goal is to teach the audience about the idea of copia, which, for him, is the exploration of interesting possibilities as they relate to issues of importance to yourself and your significant others. Copia is the celebration of the abundance of resources and knowledge that are important to our concerns, interests, and desires. This idea of abundance is a main topic in Veeder's personal philosophy. His focus for this conference is public scholarship and blending the arts and rhetoric together, of which Veeder has great passion.

Veeder began his career as a teacher in 1970. He has worked in schools varying from junior high and reservation schools to comprehensive universities. In addition to teaching, Veeder has previously worked as an editor with Rhetoric Society Quarterly, an international journal, served as vice president of Academic and Student Affairs at Central Lakes College, and assistant vice president at St. Cloud State University.

Currently he can be found at St. Cloud State University as a professor of English as well as working with organizations such as The Green Band and American Democracy Project, both with similar ideals of public scholarship as him. Veeder believes that "we have gotten into a rock throwing, mudslinging attitude that doesn't celebrate life and prevents us from working together. To fix this we need to get back to the arts and humanities and their relationships to all these things."

One of Veeder's many successes in the blending of rhetoric and art is the blues musical The Head Water Blues Opry, which he wrote with Leon Laudenbach, a blues player and close friend from St. Cloud. The musical began as a casual conversation between the two blues-loving neighbors and took nearly 6 years to finally take the stage. Featuring 15 songs by Laudenbach, this musical is the story of a Minnesota blues player trying to enter the Delta blues scene. In the creation of the musical Veeder put some of himself into each character portrayed, Iron Cat especially. "Iron Cat" is Veeder's alter-ego in the production and has become a part of him as much as Veeder has become a part of the character; they are one in the same.

While seeking venues around the country and state, Veeder and the crew also do a number of fundraisers for Take Heart America, an organization that helped save Veeder's life after a sudden cardiac arrest in 2007. Take Heart America was founded to inform people to better know how to handle emergency situations dealing with cardiac arrest. The project has successfully raised survival rates of cardiac arrest victims so much that it has also become a support group for the survivors.

More information about this IAS conference can be found on the U of M Crookston website or by contacting Mark Huglen, UMC Associate Professor, at 218-281-8275 (mhuglen@umn.edu).

For further information on the Institute for Advanced Study you can visit <http://ias.umn.edu/>. To learn more about Take Heart America you can visit their site at <http://takeheartamerica.org/>.

Today the University of Minnesota Crookston delivers 29 bachelor's degree programs, 18 minors, and more than 40 concentrations, including several online degrees, in the areas of agriculture and natural resources; business; liberal arts and education; and math, science and technology. With an enrollment of about 1,400 undergraduates from more than 25 countries and 40 states, the Crookston campus offers a supportive, close-knit atmosphere that leads to a prestigious University of Minnesota degree. "Small Campus. Big Degree." To learn more, visit www.umcrookston.edu.

News Categories

[Events](#)

[Tweet](#)

News Home

News Archives



Small Campus. Big Degree.™

- Employment
- Events Calendar
- Academic Calendar
- Library
- Directories
- Maps, Directions & Parking
- Quick Facts
- Bookstore

- Faculty & Staff🔒
- Email & Calendar🔒
- Contact Webmaster
- System Website
- Home

2900 University Ave., Crookston, MN 56716
800-862-6466 | 218-281-6510 | umcinfo@umn.edu

© 2021 Regents of the University of Minnesota. All rights reserved.
The University of Minnesota is an equal opportunity educator and employer.
[Privacy Statement](#)